



## De Russo, Rocco, Papers

### Finding Aid

## IHRC Archives

### Immigration History Research Center Archives, University of Minnesota

### Descriptive summary

	<b>Creator:</b>	De Russo, Rocco
	<b>Dates:</b>	1938-1971
	<b>Quantity:</b>	1.5 linear ft. and 1 microfilm roll
	<b>Language:</b>	Italian, English
	<b>Collection ID:</b>	IHRC524

### PROVENANCE

The papers of Rocco De Russo were deposited in the Immigration History Research Center between November, 1971 and April, 1973. They were given as a gift by De Russo and secured through the efforts of Pietro Greco and Rudolph J. Vecoli, Director of the Immigration History Research Center. The Collection consists of 1.5 linear feet of De Russo's plays and papers, primarily in Italian (much in Neopolitan dialect). It was processed during 1975-1976 by Philip F. Notarianni.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Comm. Rocco De Russo was born in Italy, and began writing plays in 1914. His life was dedicated to the work of a playwright and actor, with his company, "Arte Vera," touring various cities of the United States presenting De Russo's productions. The performances were presented in auditoriums and high school gyms, in the 1940s and 50s according to flyers in the collection (Folder 53). De Russo's career in Italian-American theater was followed in Italian-American newspapers. Later in life the playwright turned poet and published some of his work in La Follia Di New York. Comm. De Russo also wrote musical compositions, some of which were made into recording. He died June 14, 1975.

### ORGANIZATION OF MATERIALS

The organization of the collection retains its original structure as deposited in the Center. However, De Russo's plays have been placed in individual folders and arranged according to the type of play and in alphabetical order by title. The other materials have been divided according to their nature. The collection consists of seven categories: I. Autobiography (Folder 1) II. Plays (Folders 2-50) III. Poetry (Folder 51) IV. Music and Verse (Folder 52) V. Flyers (Folder 53) VI. Newspaper Clippings (Folder 54) VII. Publications

## ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

The De Russo, Rocco collection is available for public research.

## OWNERSHIP & LITERARY RIGHTS

The De Russo, Rocco collection is the physical property of the Immigration History Research Center Archives, University of Minnesota.

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## CITE AS

The De Russo, Rocco Papers, Italian American Collection, IHRC Archives, University of Minnesota

## Index Terms

	Italian
	Artists
	Theater
	Music
	Language

## Description of Series

*This section briefly describes each series in the collection. A more detailed description of the contents of each series may be found in the following section.*

<b>SERIES 1. Autobiographical</b>	
	A brief autobiography of De Russo written in October, 1971. (Also available on microfilm.)
<b>SERIES 2. Plays</b>	
	The plays of De Russo (including those adapted by him) have been organized into seven categories: Drammi Sacri (Folders 2-6); Drammi Musicali (Folders 7-15); Drammi (Folders 16-36); Commedie (Folders 37-40); Farse (Folders 41-46); Bozzetti (Folders 47-49); and Undescribed (Folder 50). These categories were taken from De Russo's titles.
<b>SERIES 3. Poetry</b>	
	This folder is poetry written by De Russo and dedicated to Professor Rudolph J. Vecoli for the Italian section of the Center's Collection.
<b>SERIES 4. Music and verse</b>	

Included here are music and verses written by De Russo, and consisting of: "Tresa, Rosa e Mariù," "Mariù," and "Voglio Parti" Pà Guerra."
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## SERIES 5. Flyers

Advertising flyers (ca. 1940s-50s) which illustrate where De Russo and his company presented their performances. These bulletins also present the actors and actresses who worked with Comm. De Russo.
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## SERIES 6. Newspaper clippings

Newspaper clippings (1938-1940s) that described De Russo as an actor, and comment on his plays.
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## SERIES 7. Publications

These are the published works of other writers, which formed a part of De Russo's collection. Four volumes were removed from the main collection and placed in the Center's imprint collection. Of particular importance is <i>Il Teatro</i> , (Volume 1, No. 1, April 1943), a monthly magazine published in New York which was dedicated to the Italian-American theater.
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# Detailed Description of the Collection

## SERIES 1. Autobiographical

A brief autobiography of De Russo written in October, 1971.
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BOX 1.
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FOLDER 1. "Brani Della Carriera Artistica Del' Artista Comm. Rocco De Russo" October, 1971
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<p>This autobiography is also available on microfilm as part of the "American Immigrant Autobiographies" series produced by University Publications of America in 1988. Following is a summary of the autobiography: [Autobiography in Italian. English responses provided by Linda Watson.] 80pp.</p>
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rocco De Russo was born in 1888 in Santo Arsenio, a province of Salerno, Italy.</li> <li>2. De Russo worked from the age of six as a musician, composer, actor, and playwright. He was most famous as a <i>macchietista</i>—one who creates humorous, often satirical, musical sketches usually based on the stock character types that make up Italian comic theater. De Russo worked both with traveling theatrical troupes and for a number of theaters in Naples, with great success.</li> <li>3. A cousin living in New York City, who had heard of De Russo's success in Italy and who knew someone in the Italian-American theatrical community in New York, urged him to come to America to seek his fortune.</li> <li>4. De Russo immigrated to the United States in 1908.</li> <li>5. Despite success in New York City's Italian-American theaters, De Russo returned to Santo Arsenio in 1908 and gave up the theater for a few years, becoming chief of police and opening a hotel and restaurant. He returned to New York City and the theater in 1911, after separating from his wife in Italy.</li> <li>6. De Russo spent a great deal of time traveling throughout the United States with theatrical troupes or working on short-term contracts as a writer for Italian-American theaters. He settled</li> </ol> |
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	<p>for extended periods of time in New York City, Chicago, Illinois, St. Mary (Ontario), Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Providence, Rhode Island.</p> <p>7. De Russo was a macchietista, actor, and director. He formed his own traveling company, which toured for twenty-six years, and owned two theaters while he lived in Chicago. In later life he wrote poetry.</p> <p>8. There was no mention of politics in the autobiography.</p> <p>9. There was no discussion of labor organizations.</p> <p>10. De Russo stated more than once that this was the story of his artistic life, not his personal life. Some family relationships are discussed, because they affected his artistic life•his brother-in-law ran the first troupe he worked for in Italy.</p> <p>11. There are only passing references to his wife and later female companions.</p> <p>12. There is no information on the wider ethnic community beyond references to audience response.</p> <p>13. There is no mention or hint of any discrimination or political persecution.</p> <p>14. The autobiography included detailed information on the Italian and Italian-American theaters, including rates of pay, locations and names of theaters, contract arrangements, prominent figures in the Italian-American theater, and sketches and dramas that were presented and audience reaction to them.</p> <p>15. De Russo names the ships on which he sailed, mentions aie fares, and includes some information on shipboard life. There is no mention of U.S. immigration officials or Ellis Island.</p>
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## SERIES 2. Plays

	The plays of De Russo (including those adapted by him) have been organized into seven categories: Drammi Sacri (Folders 2-6); Drammi Musicali (Folders 7-15); Drammi (Folders 16-36); Commedie (Folders 37-40); Farse (Folders 41-46); Bozzetti (Folders 47-49); and Undescribed (Folder 50). These categories were taken from De Russo's titles.		
	BOX 1.		
		FOLDER 2. "La Madonna Della Valle" April 4, 1952	
		Dramma Sacro in 5 Quadrie	
		FOLDER 3. "Maria S.S. Del Sacro Monte" Febuary 5, 1956	
		Dramma Sacro in 6 Atti	
		FOLDER 4. "Santa Lucia"	
		Dramma Sacro in 5 Atti	
		FOLDER 5. "Sant Antonio Di Padova"	
		Dramma in Sei Atti con Apoteosi	
		FOLDER 6. "Vita E Morte Di San Rocco Di Montpellier"	
		Dramma Sacro in 7 Quadri	
		FOLDER 7. "A Mamma E Sempe Mamma ovvero I Due Rivali." March 19, 1954	
		Lavro Drammatico Musicale in 3 Atti	
		FOLDER 8. "Le Due Madri ovvero Ritorno Zappatore." March 18, 1952	
		Sceneggiata in 3 Atti	
		FOLDER 9. "L Eroe Della Guerra Italo Etiopica ovvero Un Dellitto in Famiglia."	
		Tre Atti Drammatici Musicali	
		FOLDER 10. "Le Lagrime D Un Pagliaccio ovvero Laugh Clown Laugh."	

			Lavoro Drammatico Musicale in 3 Atti
			FOLDER 11. "I Nostri Eroi ovvero La Madre Del Soldati."
			In 4 Atti
			FOLDER 12. "Parlami D Amore Mariu"
			Tre Atti Musicali
			FOLDER 13. "Tu..Cosa Ne Hai Fatto Del Mio Cuor."
			Dramma Musicale in 3 Atti
			FOLDER 14. "Violino Tzigano."
			Nel Capolavoro Drammatico Musicale in 3 Atti
			FOLDER 15. "Zappatore"
			3 Atti Musicali
			FOLDER 16. "Amore Calpevole ovvero Il Perdono D Una Morta!" January 11, 1955
			Dramma in 5 Atti
			FOLDER 17. "L Angelo Delle Campagne ovvero Un Calpo Di Fucile."
			Dramma in 3 Atti
			FOLDER 18. "Il Calvario D Una Madre ovvero La Bestia Umama." August 23, 1944
			Dramma in 3 Atti
			FOLDER 19. "La Catena Del Forzato ovvero La Giustizia Di Dio." February 7, 1949
			Dramma in Un Prologo e 4 Atti
			FOLDER 20. "Cuore Di Padre."
			Dramma in Due Atti
			FOLDER 21. "I Disonesti ovvero Il Ritorno de Soldato." January 9, 1951
			Dramma in 3 Atti
			BOX 2.
			FOLDER 22. "La Giglia Del Condannato ovvero Il Trionfo Dell Innocenza." August 10, 1939
			Dramma in Tre Atti
			FOLDER 23. "Guiseppe Musolino Bandito Calabrese." 1930
			Dramma in 6 Atti
			FOLDER 24. "Il Gobbo Misterioso ovvero Lo Spoglia Cadaveri."
			Dramma in 3 Atti
			FOLDER 25. "Mamma Rosaria ovvero Colui che Uccide." November 16, 1950
			Dramma in 3 Atti
			FOLDER 26. "La Maschera Nera ovvero Il Pugnale Insanguinato." January 16, 1950
			Dramma in 4 Atti
			FOLDER 27. "Notte Di Sangue ovvero Tragedia in Famiglia."
			Dramma in 3 Atti
			FOLDER 28. "Sangue Calabrese ovvero Prete E Bandito." November 29, 1940
			In Due Atti, from "Don Matteo" by Camillo Antona and Filippo Tonelli.

		FOLDER 29. "Lo Scemo ovvero Gliorfani Di Guerra." December 29, 1949
		Dramma in 3 Atti
		FOLDER 30. "Lo Scemo ovvero L Orfana Di Guerra."
		Dramma di 3 Atti
		FOLDER 31. "Il Segreto Della Confessione."
		Dramma in 4 Atti
		FOLDER 32. "La Sorella Dell Assassino ovvero Mamma Rosaria." September 6, 1951
		Dramma in 3 Atti
		FOLDER 33. "La Storia D Un Frate Ossia 'Offuco scott" 'a cennere."
		Dramma in Tre Atti
		FOLDER 34. "La Terribile Notte Di Santa Rosalia ovvero Toto Malacondotta."
		FOLDER 35. "L Uomo Misterioso ovvero Un Delitto Al Cimitero Del Carmine."
		Dramma in 4 Atti
		FOLDER 36. "La Vita Dei Minatori ovvero La Povera Pazza."
		Dramma in 3 Atti
		FOLDER 37. "A Serenata D' E Mbriache."
		Scherzo Comico Musicale
		FOLDER 38. "I Cavalieri Della Fame." February 12, 1970
		Un Atto Comico
		FOLDER 39. "Pascariello Principe Di Danimarca."
		Commedia Musicale in Un Atto
		FOLDER 40. "Pulcinella Medico A Forza Di Bastonate."
		Commedia in Due Atti
		FOLDER 41. "Nu Conte Mbruglione."
		Farsetta con Pulcinella
		FOLDER 42. "Un Duello Per Amore." April 14, 1970
		Farsa
		BOX 3.
		FOLDER 43. "Pasca Si Puorco."
		Farsetta
		FOLDER 44. "Pulcinella Scrivano Pubblico."
		Farsa in Un Atto
		FOLDER 45. "Na Santarellina."
		Farsetta col Pulcinella
		FOLDER 46. "Nu Sbaglio E Fidanzate."
		Farsetta
		FOLDER 47. "Il Delatore."
		Bozzetto Drammatico in Un Atto
		FOLDER 48. "Un Delitto in Mulberry Street." February 8, 1970

			Bozzetto Drammatico
			FOLDER 49. "I Due Fratelli." May 24, 1952
			Bozzetto Abbozzatissimo
			FOLDER 50. "I Martiri Del Lavoro ovvero Madre Dolente."
			In 3 Atti

### SERIES 3. Poetry

			This folder is poetry written by De Russo and dedicated to Professor Rudolph J. Vecoli for the Italian section of the Center's Collection.
			BOX 3.
			FOLDER 51. "Alcuni Poemi Dialettali- Scritti, Negli Ultimi Temp Dall Artista: Comm. Rocco De Russo." 1971
			Poetry written by De Russo and Dedicated to Professor Rudolph J. Vecoli for the Italian section of the IHRC

### SERIES 4. Music and verse

			Included here are music and verses written by De Russo, and consisting of: "Tresa, Rosa e Mariù," "Mariù," and "Voglio Parti Pà Guerra."
			BOX 3.
			FOLDER 52. Music and Verse by De Russo 1930's
			Comprised of: "Tresa, Rosa e Mariu," and Voglio Parti P'a Guerra."

### SERIES 5. Flyers

			Advertising flyers (ca. 1940s-50s) which illustrate where De Russo and his company presented their performances. These bulletins also present the actors and actresses who worked with Comm. De Russo.
			BOX 3.
			FOLDER 53. Advertising Flyers 1940's-50s
			Flyers circulated by De Russo and his company announcing performances

### SERIES 6. Newspaper clippings

			Newspaper clippings (1938-1940s) that described De Russo as an actor, and comment on his plays.
			BOX 3.

		FOLDER 54. Newspaper Clippings 1938-1940s
		Clippings of De Russo, describing him as an actor and commenting on his plays.

## SERIES 7. Publications

	These are the published works of other writers, which formed a part of De Russo's collection. Four volumes were removed from the main collection and placed in the Center's imprint collection. Of particular importance is Il Teatro, (Volume 1, No. 1, April 1943), a monthly magazine published in New York which was dedicated to the Italian-American theater.	
	BOX 3.	
		FOLDER 55. Antona- Traversi, Camillo E Ribau, Adolfo. "In Pace!" 1913
		Tradgedia In Due Atti In Prosa. Lugano, Casa Editrice "Risorgimento"
		FOLDER 56. Bugamelli, Gustavo 1910
		"Il Conte Dell' Isola onte-Cristo ossia Il Marinajo E Lo Scienziato." Produzione drammatica divisa in sei parti. Milano, Carlo Barbini
		FOLDER 57. Giacometti, Paolo.
		"Cristoforo Colombo Alla Scoperta Dell America." New York, Societa Libreria Italiana.
		FOLDER 58. Giacometti, Paolo. 1928
		"La Morte Civile." Dramma in cinque atti. Milano, Casa Editrice Sonzogno.
		FOLDER 59. Ruggi, Lorenzo. 1914
		"Cravata Nera." Scena drammatica. Bologna, G. Brugnoli e Figli.
		FOLDER 60. Sartene, Jean. 1921
		"L' Artiglio." Dramma in un Atto. Todotto per la scena italiana da Camillo Antona- Traversi. Bologna, G. Brugnoli e Figli.
		FOLDER 61. Scarpetta, Eduardo. 1900
		"Misera e Nobilta." Commedia in Tre Atti. Preceduta de una lettere di G. Bovio. Napoli, Luigi Pierro.
		FOLDER 62. Scognamiglio, Mario 1910
		"Nu Nipote Fauzo." Commedia in 3 Atti. Napoli, Tommaso Pironti.
		FOLDER 63. Souvage, Signor 1909
		"Il Lupo Di Mare ovvero Mastro Girgio Il Marinojo." Dramma in Due Atti. Firenze, Adriano Salani, Editore.
		FOLDER 64. "Cantata dei Patori." n.d.
		FOLDER 65. "S. Lorenzo ossia La Carita Cristiana." Majocchi, 1889
		Dramma Sacro in Tre Atti. D'Un Sacerdote Ambrosiano. "L' Amicizia E La Giustizia." Dramma in Cinque Atti. Milano, Libreria Editrice Ditta Serafino.

Publications removed from the Collection and placed in the Immigration History Research Center's imprint collection: Brocco, Roberto. Teatro. Volume Terzo. Don Pietro Caruso- La Fine Dell Àmore-Fiori D'Arancio-Tragedie Dell'Anima. New York, Società Libreria Italiana. Martignoni, Alessandro F. Santa Maria Goretti. New York, Vatican City Religious Book Co., Inc., 1951. Attached to the inside cover of this volume is a letter from De Russo written to Pietro Greco explaining why De



Russo did not the use the story for one his plays. Sturchio, Eugenio. L'Incontaminato. Mistero in prologo e cinque atti, liberamente trattato su notizi assunte dalla vita di San Gerardo Majella. Newark, N.J., Tribune Printing Co., 1942 Il Teatro. Rivista Mensile Teatrale, Volume 1, No. 1., New York, April, 1943.

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